

# Ireland

## Group Travel Made Easy

## on the *Emerald Isle*

Kylemore Abbey

*By Jerry Soverinsky*

Having spent over 20 years developing and hosting European group tours, I've found no better destination for group travel—regardless of season or group theme—than Ireland. (To be clear, I sold my company several years ago and now work exclusively as a writer.) The country succeeds in consistently exceeding the expectations of both tour group members and leaders—over and over again.

Any mention of Ireland's success must start with its people. The extraordinarily accommodating nature of the Irish provides the most welcoming environment for group travel. No matter how intricate or complex your group itineraries, they'll never seem insulating, because the Irish will become part of your groups' trip experiences. It might be your motorcoach driver, or innkeeper, or maybe the guy pouring pints of Guinness at the local pub. More than likely, it will be all three, as you'll get to know the people and personalities who make Ireland such a warm, intimate place to visit, and they in turn will provide both you and your group with stories that will remain with you for the rest of your lives.



**Tourism  
Ireland**

*Marketing the island  
of Ireland*



Cliffs of Moher

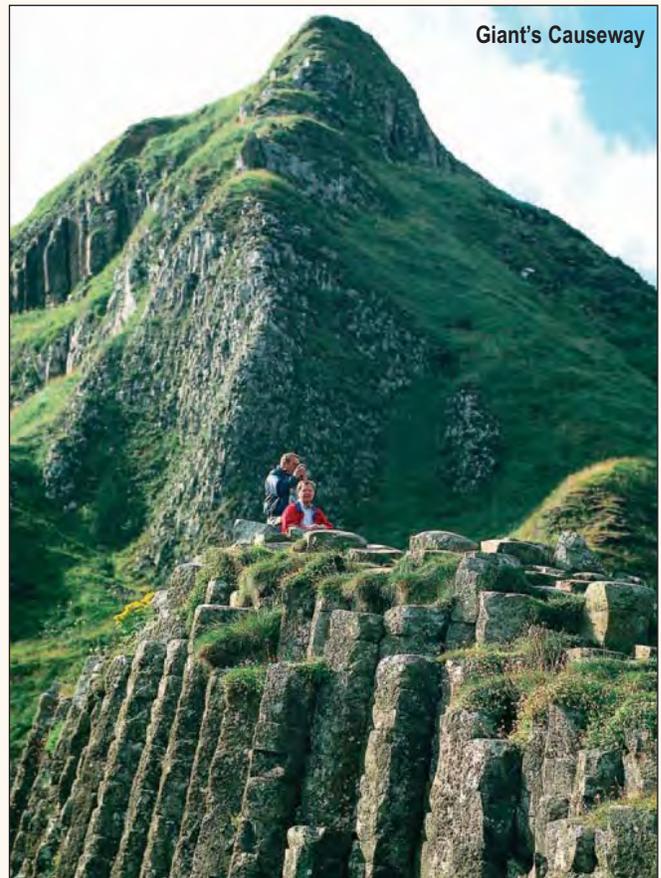
One of Ireland's greatest tourism assets is its huge variety of offerings. Whether your group is interested in history, castles, architecture, cultural events, food and wine, gardens, literature, active pursuits, or natural sites and scenery, you'll find an endless variety of world-class options there, all contained within a very manageable area. This won't go unnoticed by your group, either. Almost all of my Ireland tours ended with one or more participants commenting, "I never knew there was so much to see and do in Ireland. I can't wait to come back." Here's just a snapshot of what you can expect:

### Layout

Ireland is an oasis of unspoiled scenery, prehistoric sites, cosmopolitan cities, and bustling towns and villages, all nestled comfortably on a very accessible 300 miles north-south, 150 miles east-west island. You won't need to worry about "dead" time spent on a motorcoach, either, since you can reach most sites and attractions relatively quickly by bus or boat. This will keep your group actively engaged, allowing them to enjoy robust, well-rounded itineraries, even in the most abbreviated time frame.

### Sightseeing

The Cliffs of Moher (Co. Clare), Giant's Causeway (Co. Antrim), Aran Islands (off the coast of Galway), Ring of Kerry (Co. Kerry) and Glenveagh National Park (Co. Donegal), are just a few of Ireland's treasured natural sites, as impressive and dramatic a collection as any throughout the world. These are unspoiled, majestic



Giant's Causeway



Wicklow Golf Club

landscapes and coastlines, not kitschy, fabricated tourist traps. And they're accessible to groups of all sizes.

Additionally, there's an informality at many of Ireland's sites and attractions that allows groups the freedom to explore them at unhurried, individual paces (no small task with groups of 20 and 30 people), free from restrictive reservation times. This is a tremendous asset, one that all group leaders will appreciate. Visits

typically proceed as follows: a bus arrives at a designated parking area; a driver or guide handles admission logistics; and within minutes, the group is busy sightseeing. This “green light” treatment is common throughout Ireland, as its tourism infrastructure places a heavy emphasis on efficiently accommodating group movements.

Along those lines, working with local drivers and guides is a breeze in Ireland. Not only will you find them to be tremendous resources of Ireland information and expert travel managers, but their enthusiasm and passions will become infectious with group members, ensuring truly memorable trip experiences.

### Prehistoric Sites

In addition to scenery, Ireland is a treasure trove of archaeological wonders. The Burren and Connemara along Ireland’s west coast are rich with dolmens (megalithic stone tombs) and other prehistoric remnants, all easily accessible to motorcoaches and cars. With the insights from a certified guide, the history comes alive for your group members.

### Themes

One of Ireland’s greatest assets for travel planning professionals is the diverse interests that it accommodates. Here are just a few suggestions:



Grand Opera House



Birr Castle

**Literature** lovers will delight in itineraries that follow the trails of Nobel winners Beckett, Yeats, and Shaw, as well as equally acclaimed literary greats Joyce and Wilde.

Those with a fondness for **castles** will find dozens of stunning examples, including Ross Castle (Co. Kerry), Birr Castle (Co. Offaly), Kilkenny Castle (Co. Kilkenny), Ashford (Co. Mayo) and Dromoland (Co. Clare). For an extraordinary experience, you might also consider spending overnights at Ashford and Dromoland—both double as extraordinary hotels.

Green thumb enthusiasts will find lush, ornate **gardens** throughout Ireland, such as Strokestown House & Gardens (Co. Roscommon), Mount Stewart House & Gardens (Co. Down), Belvedere House & Gardens (Co. Westmeath), and Dillon Garden (Dublin), to name a few.

**Active travelers** and **outdoor enthusiasts** will find Ireland to be one of the most favorable destinations for golf, walking, cycling, equestrian and watersports holidays. I’ve hosted dozens of tours for all age groups and

# Aer Lingus Groups Direct

Providing one stop for easy, cost effective travel for groups of six or more.

Planning a family reunion, wedding, shopping or golfing trip? Whatever your reason for getting together with a group of six or more, take advantage of our flexible payment rules, our everyday low fares and our friendly service. And when you book more, you'll save more!

Aer Lingus Groups Direct  
(888) 474-8448

Call Aer Lingus Groups Direct and speak personally with one of our Specialists. You will experience first-hand knowledge, expertise and service.



## Aer Lingus Groups Direct is your one stop for...

### Access to the lowest Aer Lingus Group fares

If you're flexible with your travel dates, ask us about our special Shamrock Days. Offered exclusively through Aer Lingus Groups Direct, we will provide you with access to the lowest Aer Lingus group fares available at the time of booking. No hidden premiums, just our best fares.

Shamrock Days						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						
						
						
						
						

### Group Leader Incentives: Easy budgeting and planning.

Reward yourself! Earn money towards an Aer Lingus ticket.

A group leader plays an important role in all facets of the trip from getting together, selecting an itinerary, to payment responsibilities.

We want to make the process easier from start to finish and reward you for all your hard work, too.

For every passenger above ten who travel on Aer Lingus as part of your group, you will earn **\$15\*** for use on your ticket.

### The lowest prices on tours and other land options.

We have contracted special rates with hotels, B&B's, Castles, Car Rental Agencies, Tourist Destinations and Tour Operators; all to ensure that you receive the best possible prices, guaranteed.



### Personalized service from start to finish.

Ireland offers something for every taste and budget. Whether you are a seasoned traveler or a novice, your dedicated Groups Direct Specialist will be guiding you every step of the way.

Our Specialists will work with you on reservations, building land itineraries, seat assignments, travel insurance, check-in and addressing all of your special needs.

\* Contact Aer Lingus Groups Direct for complete terms & conditions

fitness levels on active Ireland holidays; they were all successful.

**Shopaholics** will find ample opportunities to flex their credit card muscle, with Waterford Crystal, Belleek Pottery, and Irish silver among just a few of the island's handcrafted specialties.

**Food** connoisseurs will find endless culinary treasures in Ireland. I've hosted very successful food programs for some of the world's most discriminating foodies (including food writers), all interested in the artisanal, world-class offerings of Ireland's specialty producers and its rapidly expanding list of Michelin-rated restaurants.



Finally, Ireland appeals to the most high-browed **cultural** interests. Whether your tastes favor comedy, music, theatre, museums, art galleries, or drama, you'll find an endless assortment of world-class facilities and lively festivals throughout the country, a comprehensive offering that will challenge and entertain the most diverse group interests.

To illustrate Ireland's variety of sites and attractions, a typical tour might include visits to see The Book of Kells, a 9th century manuscript housed in Trinity College's library (Dublin); the Ulster American Folk Park (Co. Tyrone), an open-air museum in Northern Ireland that traces the story of Ulster emigration to America; the Jameson Heritage Centre (Co. Cork), for a lively presentation of the history of Irish whiskey (tastings are optional—though highly recommended); and the Rock of Cashel (Co. Tipperary), the most visited Heritage site in Ireland and a spectacular group of medieval buildings.

## Facilities

Ireland's extensive assortment of well-appointed, luxury accommodations and indulgent spas, coupled with the dotting attention of hands-on hotel proprietors and managers, ensure that you and your group receive the attention you require at the end of each day. This extends into all reaches of the country, from large, cosmopolitan cities like Dublin, Belfast, Galway and Cork, to quaint, towns and villages like Dingle (Co. Kerry), Newcastle (Co. Down), Kinsale (Co. Cork) and Doolin (Co. Clare).



## Practical Ireland

### When to Go

Ireland is perfect for year-round travel, with a mild, temperate climate providing consistent temperature ranges without extremes. With summer temperatures averaging 60-70 degrees, spring and fall 50 degrees, and winter 40-45 degrees, almost any group activity can be planned no matter the season. I've hosted groups with great success in winter and early spring. Not only was the weather dry and comfortable, but airfares were substantially lower than in peak summer months, resulting in very favorable trip costs. To be sure, Ireland receives its share of rain, though it has never diminished any of my groups' experiences (especially with welcoming pubs so prevalent).

### How to Get There

With flights from seven US gateways on five airlines providing nonstop service to Ireland, transatlantic travel is simple and hassle-free. Not to mention, because of Ireland's position as Europe's westernmost country, travel times to Ireland are substantially less than to continental Europe. As an example, direct flights from New York to Shannon last just over six hours—roughly the same as travel time to Los Angeles.

For more information on travel to Ireland, contact **Tourism Ireland** at 800.223.6470 or visit [www.discoverireland.com](http://www.discoverireland.com).



Ireland's

Premier

Golfing

Experience

800.535.6148  
[celticgolf.com](http://celticgolf.com)



**Celtic Tours**  
World Vacations

Where do you want to go?

## Let's get down to Group Business!

*Celtic Tours World Vacations - Independently owned and operated since 1972.*

*Our experience with and enthusiasm for Group Travel is displayed in the exceptional service, value and advice we provide for our valuable Travel Partners.*

- Specializing in Ireland, Britain, Italy, Germany, Australia & New Zealand
- Active members of USTOA, NTA & ASTA TOP
- Scheduled Coach Tours - weekly departures
- Customized Group Programs
- Guaranteed Prices - NO SURCHARGES
- Professional Driver/Guides - Deluxe touring coaches
- Advertising support available for 2007 groups!
- "Irish Pub Tour" - 7 days from \$639 land New Tour!
- "Celtic Dream" Ireland - 12 days from \$1759 land
- "Treasures of Italy" - 8 days from \$1520 land
- "Classic South Pacific" - 18/25 days from \$4990 land



Celtic Tours World Vacations 1-800-833-4373

Visit [www.celtictours.com](http://www.celtictours.com)

